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VISAS DONKEY

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TEXT

TAGS: CVIS, PGOV, GE (PRIEWE, GUENTER GUSTAV ERDMANN)
COMBINE: COMPLETE

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2001 2007

SUBJ: SAO REQUEST: POSSIBLE INELIGIBILITY 212(A)(3)(E)

REF: BERLIN 01475

1. VISAS DONKEY

2. PRIEWE, GUENTER GUSTAV
ERDMANN

GERMAN

AUGUST 28, 1925 SUCCOW, POMERANIA

RETIRED DRIVER

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
2000

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3. APPLICATION RECEIVED MARCH 21, 1991

4. INTERVIEWED ON OCTOBER 17, 1991

5. MR. PRIEWE CAME TO THE CONSULATE'S ATTENTION WHEN HE ANSWERED YES TO QUESTION NUMBER 35 ON THE OF-156 AND ADDED THAT HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE WAFFEN SS BEGINNING IN FEBRUARY 1943. AN AVLOS CHECK REVEALED NO INFORMATION IN THE COMPUTER SYSTEM AND REFTEL FROM THE BDC REPORTED THAT APPLICANT DID NOT REPEAT NOT APPEAR IN BDC FILES. PRIOR TO THIS INTERVIEW, THE SAO PROCESS WAS EXPLAINED TO MR. PRIEWE AND HE WAS REQUESTED TO BRING ANY DOCUMENTS IN HIS POSSESSION WHICH MIGHT RELATE TO HIS SERVICE IN THE GERMAN WEHRMACHT. UNFORTUNATELY, HE HAS NO SUCH RECORDS. HOWEVER, MR. PRIEWE WAS QUITE CLEAR ON DETAILS, DATES, AND PLACES OF SERVICE, AND WAS COOPERATIVE AND CANDID THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW. HE MADE A FAVORABLE IMPRESSION ON CONOFF WITH HIS DEMEANOR AND ATTITUDE. A CHRONOLOGY OF MR. PRIEWE'S WARTIME ACTIVITIES FOLLOWS.

6. BACKGROUND: MR. PRIEWE ADMITTED THAT HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE HITLER YOUTH BEGINNING AT HIS 10TH BIRTHDAY IN 1935 AND CONTINUING UNTIL HE JOINED THE ARMY AT THE AGE OF 17. HE STATED THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO HAVE BEEN IN SCHOOL AND NOT HAVE JOINED, BUT HE ALSO STATED THAT HE HAD NO IDEOLOGICAL ATTACHMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION AND WAS NEVER A MEMBER OF THE NAZI PARTY. HIS FIRST CONTACT WITH THE GERMAN MILITARY OCCURED IN THE SUMMER OF 1942 WHEN HE WAS ORDERED THROUGH THE HITLER YOUTH TO REPORT FOR INSPECTION. HE UNDERWENT A MEDICAL EXAM AND WAS ASKED WHERE HE WANTED TO SERVE; AS A FARMER'S SON HE EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE TO JOIN THE INFANTRY OR ARTILLERY SO HE COULD WORK WITH HORSES. LATER, HE RECEIVED A PITCH LETTER ASKING HIM TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE WAFFEN SS, WHICH HE IGNORED. ALTHOUGH HE SHOULD HAVE REPORTED TO THE REICHSSARBEITSDIENST (A CIVIC WORKS PROGRAM OF BUILDING ROADS, CANALS, ETC.) IN OCTOBER 1942, HE RECEIVED A THREE MONTH DEFERMENT TO COMPLETE AGRICULTURE SCHOOL. THIS WAS DONE BY CHRISTMAS 1942, AND HE REPORTED TO THE SERVICE AT GREIFSWALD IN POMERANIA ON JANUARY 14, 1943. AFTER TWO WEEKS OF STANDING AROUND WITH NO EQUIPMENT AND NO WORK, SS RECRUITING OFFICERS VISITED THE CAMP, AND ANYONE OVER 168 CM WAS TOLD TO REPORT TO THE MESS HALL. APPLICANT (HEIGHT 174 CM) UNDERWENT A PHYSICAL EXAM AND SHORTLY AFTER WAS GIVEN ORDERS AND A TRAIN TICKET AND TOLD TO REPORT TO SS HEADQUARTERS IN PRAGUE. APPLICANT STATED THAT HE DID NOT VOLUNTEER FOR THE WAFFEN SS.

7. BASIC TRAINING AND ACTIVE DUTY: APPLICANT ARRIVED IN PRAGUE IN LATE JANUARY 1943 AND WAS ASSIGNED TO AN INFANTRY UNIT OF THE SS AUSBILDUNGSREGIMENT PRAG (PRAGUE SS TRAINING REGIMENT). HE REMAINED THERE IN BASIC TRAINING UNTIL APRIL 20, 1943, WHEN HE WAS

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TRANSFERRED TO THE EXERCISE FIELD AT MILOVICE, 40 KM NORTHEAST OF PRAGUE, FOR A WEEK OF FIRING PRACTICE. AT THIS POINT MR. PRIEWE OFFERED AN INTERESTING VISAS DONKEY

ANECDOTE. HE STATED THAT HE SHOULD HAVE RETURNED TO HIS BARRACKS IN PRAGUE FOR A CEREMONIAL INDUCTION INTO THE WAFFEN SS, AND BEEN TATTOOED, BUT MISSED THIS EVENT WHEN THE UNIT WAS SENT DIRECTLY TO KHAR'KOV ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT. HE ARRIVED IN RUSSIA AT THE BEGINNING OF MAY 1943 BUT REMAINED INACTIVE THROUGH MAY AND JUNE, ASSIGNED TO A FELDERSATZBATTALION. (FIELD REPLACEMENT BATTALION) WHERE HE UNDERWENT TRAINING WITH HEAVY WEAPONS, INFANTRY ARTILLERY, AND GRENADES. IN JULY HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE SECOND SS DIVISION DAS REICH, REGIMENT DEUTSCHLAND, EIGHTH COMPANY, AND MOVED TO THE FRONT. THE UNIT MOVED SOUTH FROM KHAR'KOV TO PETRONOVKA AND STEPANOVKA, SMALL TOWNS NEAR KRAMATORSK. HE SPENT ONLY THREE WEEKS AT THE FRONT BEFORE SUFFERING A SERIOUS STOMACH WOUND ON AUGUST 1, 1943. HE WAS OPERATED ON IN A SMALL FIELD HOSPITAL IN SHITIKOVO, SPENT THREE WEEKS RECOVERING IN ANOTHER HOSPITAL IN STALINO (NOW CALLED DONETSK), AND AT THE END OF THE MONTH WAS SENT TO RESERVE HOSPITAL NUMBER FIVE IN LEMBERG (LVOV). HE REMAINED THERE ONLY TWO WEEKS AND WAS FINALLY TRANSFERRED TO HEIDENAU, NEAR DRESDEN FOR FURTHER RECUPERATION. ALTHOUGH HE COULD STAND AFTER FOUR WEEKS, THE WOUND WAS SO SERIOUS THAT HE WAS NOT RELEASED FROM HOSPITALS UNTIL NOVEMBER 27, 1943. AT THAT TIME, HE WAS DECLARED FIT FOR DUTY, BUT NOT FOR THE FRONT. MR. PRIEWE STATED THAT MEMBERS OF THE WAFFEN SS WERE NEVER RELEASED FROM ACTIVE DUTY, REGARDLESS OF THEIR WOUNDS, BUT WERE ALWAYS REASSIGNED.

8. CLERICAL TRAINING: AFTER TWO WEEKS HOME LEAVE IN DECEMBER 1943, APPLICANT REPORTED TO HIS ORIGINAL UNIT IN PRAGUE, WHICH WAS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO UNDERGO CLERICAL RE-TRAINING. HE WAS SENT TO HAMBURG IN JANUARY 1944 AND PARTICIPATED IN A COURSE ON MILITARY WRITING STYLE AND JARGON, TYPEWRITING, AND RECORD KEEPING, WHICH LASTED UNTIL OCTOBER. MR. PRIEWE STATED THAT AS A MEMBER OF THIS CLERICAL CORPS HE WAS ASSIGNED TO AN INDEPENDENT UNIT, THE SS STAMMKOMPANIE (SS CORE COMPANY), ALSO KNOWN AS THE KOMPANIE ZUR BESONDEREN VERWENDUNG - ZBV, (COMPANY FOR SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT), WHICH CONSISTED OF 600-800 MEN. IN OCTOBER 1944 AFTER THE COURSE WAS COMPLETED, HE WAS TO REPORT TO GRAZ, AUSTRIA. HE WAS UNDERWAY WHEN HIS ORDERS WERE CHANGED AND HE ENDED UP SPENDING OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER 1944 IN DACHAU, GERMANY. UNDER INTENSE QUESTIONING, MR. PRIEWE STATED THAT HE HAD NO IDEA WHY THE DELAY OCCURED BUT CLAIMED THAT DURING THIS TIME HE HAD NO, REPEAT NO SPECIAL TASKS, JOBS, OR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP. APPLICANT STATED THAT HIS BARRACKS WAS SEPARATE FROM THE CONCENTRATION CAMP AND THAT HE WAS NEVER ACTUALLY

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IN THE PRISONER PORTION OF THE FACILITY. HE WAS NOT ASSIGNED TO THE SS UNIT GUARDING THE CAMP, AND THEREFORE WAS GIVEN NOTHING TO DO. HOWEVER, HE WAS THE FIRST SAO APPLICANT TO ADMIT THAT HE HAD SUSPICIONS CONCERNING THE PURPOSE OF THE CAMP. HE HEARD THE STANDARD STORIES ABOUT POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MISFITS, BUT ALSO HEARD RUMORS ABOUT THE TRUE NATURE OF THE CAMP, AND WONDERED AT THE TIME WHY A TRIPLE BARBED WIRE FENCE WAS NECESSARY. IN LATE DECEMBER THE SS ASKED FOR VOLUNTEERS TO WORK IN HEADQUARTERS IN BERLIN, AND APPLICANT VOLUNTEERED BECAUSE IT MEANT BEING CLOSER TO HIS HOME IN POMERANIA. ALTHOUGH HE REMAINED UNDER THE COMMAND OF THE SPECIAL STAMMKOMPANIE, HE EDED UP WORKING FOR THE SONDERKOMMANDO PERSONNEL/ADMIN SECTION OF THE FIRST SS DIVISION, LEIBSTNDARTE ADOLF HITLER. APPLICANT STATED EMPHATIALLY, HOWEVER, THAT HE NEVER APPEARED ON THEMEMBERSHIP ROLLS OF THE FIRST SS DIVISION.

9. WORK IN THE REICHSKANZLEI: MR. PRIEWE STATE THAT UPON ARRIVAL IN BERLIN HE WAS ASSIGNED TO ORK IN THE REICHSKANZLEI, BUT THAT HIS DUTIES ERE THOSE OF A MINOR CLERK, AND CLAIMED THAT HS MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY WAS COLLECTING THE MAIL FOM THE POST OFFICE BOX EVERY MORNING. DURING TE TIME THAT APPLICANT WAS IN BERLIN, CHRISTMAS1944 UNTIL MAY 2, 1945, THE CITY ENDURED ALMST DAILY AIR RAIDS AND THE CHANCELLERY SUFFERED FEW DIRECT HITS. APPLICANT'S OFFICE WAS IN VISAS DONKEY

THE BASEMENT AND HE CONTINUED TO SHUFFLE PAPERS ON WEAPONS, FUEL, AND SUPPLIES ACQUISITION AND TRANSFER FOR THE FIRST SS DIVISION IN HUNGARY, AS WELL AS PROCESSING THEIR PAY VOUCHERS. IN ADDITION, HIS OFFICE WAS IN CHARGE OF ACQUIRING FOOD FOR THE COMMAND IN BERLIN. AT THIS POINT, APPLCANT WAS ASKED IF ANY OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES INVOLVED ADMINISTRATION OR OVERSIGHT OF CONCENTRATION OR PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS. APPLICANT STATED THAT NO INFORMATION ON SUCH CAMPS OR OTHER NAZI ATROCITIES EVER CROSSED HIS DESK, AND SUSPECTED THAT MORE SENIOR CLERKS OR HIS SUPERIOR OFFICERS RECEIVED OR WERE INVOLVED WITH SUCH INFORMATION. APPLICANT POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS ONLY PROMOTED TO ROTTENFUEHRER (CORPORAL) ON APRIL 20, 1945 AND STATED THE BELIEF THAT CLERKS OF HIS JUNIOR STANDING WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TRUSTED WITH INFORMATION CONCERNING CONCENTRATION CAMPS.

10. CAPTURE AND PRISONER OF WAR: MR. PRIEWE WAS CAPTURED IN BERLIN BY THE RUSSIANS ON MAY 2, 1945 AND SPENT TWO WEEKS IN A DETENTION CAMP IN BERLIN BEFORE BEING MARCHED EAST. BY JUNE HE WAS IN POSEN, (POZNAN) POLAND, AND IN AUGUST 1945 ARRIVED AT A PRISONER WORK CAMP IN LENINGRAD. FOR TWO YEARS HE WORKED AS A LABORER ON RUSSIAN CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS BEFORE BEING

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RELEASED IN JUNE 1947. APPLICANT STATED THAT OTHER PRISONERS WERE HELD FOR UP TO FIVE YEARS, BUT HE WAS RELEASED ALONG WITH OLDER PRISONERS BECAUSE HIS STOMACH WOUND MADE HIM UNFIT FOR STRENUOUS WORK DUTY. AT THIS TIME, APPLICANT'S WORK IN THE REICHSKANZLEI WAS FURTHER DISCUSSED. HE STATED THAT THE RUSSIA/S KNEW OF HIS SERVICE IN SS HEADQUARTERS, BUT DID NOT CONSIDER HIM A POSSIBLE WAR CRIMINAL BECAUSE OF HIS AGE AND SIMPLE BACKGROUND. APPLICANT'S PARENTS WERE FARMERS AND HE COMPLETED ONLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND HIS AGRICULTURE SCHOOLING, AND DID NOT GO ON TO WHAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED MIDDLE SCHOOL OR COLLEGE PREP COURSES. THIS WAS NOT THE TYPICAL BACKGROUND OF IMPORTANT TECHNOCRATS, BUREAUCRATS, OR OFFICERS IN CLASS-CONSCIOUS GERMANY. APPLICANT FURTHER STATED THAT HE RECEIVED NO DENAZIFICATION PAPERS FROM THE SOVIETS UPON HIS RELEASE, AND NEVER PURSUED SUCH A DOCUMENT AFTER HIS RETURN TO GERMANY.

11. GENERAL POINTS OF DISCUSSION: AFTER THE CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS WERE ESTABLISHED, GENERAL POINTS OF INELIGIBILITY UNDER SECTION UNDER 212(A)(3)(E) WERE DISCUSSED. MR. PRIEWE STATED THAT HE HAD NEVER SERVED AS A CONCENTRATION OR PRISONER OF WAR CAMP GUARD, NOT EVEN AFTER HE HAD BEEN WOUNDED. HE NEVER WORKED IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP, AND OTHER THAN THE TIME NEAR DACHAU IN 1944, HAD NEVER BEEN STATIONED NEAR SUCH A FACILITY. APPLICANT NEVER SENT PRISONERS OFF TO CAMPS, NEVER SERVED IN A POLICE UNIT, AND DID NOT TAKE PART IN THE PERSECUTION OF PEOPLE BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, OR POLITICAL OPINION. HE VOLUNTEERED THE OPINION THAT OLDER SOLDIERS WERE USED TO GUARD PRISONERS OF WAR AND THAT HIS SUPERIORS OR THE SYSTEM WOULD NOT HAVE CONSIDERED HIM RELIABLE (ZUVERLAESSIG) ENOUGH FOR THE DIRTY JOBS ASSOCIATED WITH NAZI ATROCITIES. DESPITE HIS SUSPICIONS AT DACHAU AND THE WHISPERS AMONG THE TROOPS, APPLICANT DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF DEATH CAMPS SUCH AS AUSCHWITZ DURING THE WAR. HE STATED THAT HE LEARNED OF SUCH PLACES ONLY AFTER HIS CAPTURE BY THE RUSSIANS AND HIS RETURN TO GERMANY TWO YEARS LATER.

12. CONCLUSIONS: CONOFF BELIEVES THAT MR. PRIEWE HAS OVERCOME THE PRESUMPTION OF INELIGIBILITY UNDER SECTION 212(A)(3)(E) OF THE INA. HIS DEMEANOR AND CANDOR DURING THE INTERVIEW WERE IMPRESSIVE, AS WAS HIS RECALL OF EVENTS FIFTY YEARS AGO. HIS ANSWERS TO POINTED QUESTIONS WERE DIRECT AND COMPLETE, AND THE INFORMATION HE VOLUNTEERED, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE DID NOT KNOW THAT CONOFF HAD NO BACKGROUND INFORMATION FROM THE BDC TO CORROBORATE THE ANSWERS, WAS IMPRESSIVE. POST AWAITS THE DEPARTMENT'S OPINION IN THIS CASE. BARTLETT

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END OF MESSAGE

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